

Message

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Sent: 12/22/2020 4:17:08 PM
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Subject: Cuomo announces agreement for US Navy, Northrop Grumman to address LI plume

<https://longisland.news12.com/cuomo-announces-agreement-for-us-navy-northrop-grumman-to-address-li-plume>

Cuomo announces agreement for US Navy, Northrop Grumman to address LI plume

December 21, 2020

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday announced a \$406 million agreement in principle for the U.S. Navy and Northrop Grumman to take steps to address the plume of contamination in Bethpage and surrounding areas. Under the agreement, Cuomo's office says the U.S. Navy and Northrop Grumman will begin construction of a "network of extraction wells to hydraulically contain and remediate the contaminated plume."

Additionally, Northrop Grumman will pay a \$104.4 million settlement to "advance cleanup, water supply and aquifer protection projects," Cuomo said. It marks the largest natural resource damages settlement in state history, the governor said.

The agreement is being finalized by legal teams representing New York state, the Navy and Northrop Grumman, according to the governor's office.

"For decades, one of the most critical and intractable problems for Long Island was the toxic contamination caused by the Grumman and Navy sites. With this settlement — the largest of its kind in state history — we're making the polluters pay and remedy the environmental degradation they caused," Gov. Cuomo said in a statement. "The problem was talked about for years, and many were convinced a resolution would never come, but in New York we don't back down in the fight against industrial pollution."

Cuomo said at Monday's COVID-19 news briefing that the plume was a personal issue for him for many years, back to his days as attorney general. "It was a long fight, but it will protect the drinking water for the people on Long Island," he said.

Rep. Tom Suozzi said in a statement, "This agreement with Northrop Grumman and the recent agreement with the Navy are dramatic steps forward in this 40-year nightmare. I commend the governor, the DEC, Newsday, the environmental groups and the other elected officials who have joined forces to push this plan forward. My highest praise is reserved, however, for the Bethpage Water District, who has unfairly shouldered this burden for far too long but has never failed in its mission of delivering clean water to the community it serves. I will continue to push for a requirement that Northrop Grumman pay the Bethpage Water District to acquire Plant 4 which will facilitate the cleanup and provide the water district with needed financial relief."

Officials say installment of the containment wells could begin as soon as January.

Bethpage resident on plume cleanup: '40 years too late,' but 'definitely good news'

David M. Schwartz and Paul LaRocco

December 21, 2020

Water districts, environmentalists, elected officials and residents hailed the agreements between the state and U.S. Navy and Northrop Grumman as a significant — but long overdue — victory for Bethpage and the neighboring communities that have battled pollution for decades.

It's the first time that regulators and polluters all have agreed to stop the Grumman groundwater contamination plume's foot-per-day spread and institute a full cleanup.

"It's probably 40 years too late," said Jeanne O'Connor, a fourth-generation Bethpage resident and activist for a stronger cleanup, whose mother and grandfather held jobs at Grumman. "But it's definitely good news."

Richard Humann, president and CEO of H2M architects + engineers of Melville, the Bethpage Water District's longtime environmental consultant, called the deal, which also includes \$104 million in environmental damages to be paid by Northrop Grumman, "monumental."

The Plume: Decades of Deceit

"It's a once-and-for-all moment," he said. "This should be the start of a 100-percent commitment on behalf of Grumman and the federal government to completely address the plume."

For Massapequa, whose drinking water supply lies in the plume's path, proposed containment wells along the Southern State Parkway would match what the district long has been advocating.

"We have for the first time all agencies on the same page," said Stan Carey, superintendent of the Massapequa Water District.

Rep. Tom Suozzi (D-Glen Cove) called the agreements "dramatic steps forward in this 40-year nightmare," thanking Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, state environmental officials, environmentalists, as well as Newsday, which published an investigation earlier this year, [The Grumman Plume: Decades of Deceit](#), detailing the history of deceptive statements, missteps and minimization that slowed cleanup.

Suozzi, however, highlighted the fight from Bethpage Water District, which he said "has unfairly shouldered this burden for far too long."

Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), who advocated for more than a decade for a more aggressive cleanup — once bringing top Navy brass to Bethpage — called the announcement Monday "a very welcome course correction."

"This is a big, big deal," said Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino, who as a state assemblyman sponsored a bill that first called for the Department of Environmental Conservation to study a full plume containment strategy. "People have been waiting, and some didn't believe a cleanup would ever come. It really speaks volumes of never giving up."

Environmental advocates also praised the news.

"Long Islanders' only source of drinking water is groundwater. This is long overdue and welcomed news.

Health must be protected, and the polluters should pay for the cleanup," said Judith Enck, former Environmental Protection Agency regional administrator and president of Beyond Plastics.

She noted that when Newsday published its investigation in February, "I think it got the attention of many key players."

For others, the sense of victory was dampened by how long it has taken to get there.

Anthony Sabino, the Bethpage Water District's former counsel, was one of the first people to call for a full plume containment, 30 years ago. He also called for the state to sue Northrop Grumman for environmental damages about 20 years ago.

"At that time, it may have done some good," he said, expressing regret over how long it took to get to today and pessimism that the plume can still be fully contained. "In any event, it's a good thing for water suppliers."

Sabino, however, reiterated the years of state regulatory failures that only ended within the last six years: "One expects guilty parties to try to minimize their liability. One doesn't expect the state government to help them. That's exactly what happened here."

The Daily Star (AP)

https://www.thedailystar.com/news/state/ny-reaches-deal-on-cleanup-at-long-island-aerospace-site/article_a3f95c1a-b827-5c82-855f-ad457ceafe4c.html

NY reaches deal on cleanup at Long Island aerospace site

December 21, 2020

New York has reached an agreement with defense contractor Northrop Grumman and the U.S. Navy on a \$406 million plan to clean up a massive plume of underground contamination left from Long Island's heyday as a hub of aerospace manufacturing, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Monday.

Northrop Grumman will pay a \$104 million settlement for environmental damages that will be used for the 30-year containment project and related efforts, including protection for local wells and water systems that had been compromised by pollution from the Bethpage facility. Grumman and the Navy will be responsible for the bulk of the work.

Cuomo announced the agreement nearly a year after the state threatened to take polluters to court over what was then projected to be a \$585 million bill for cleaning up the nearly 7-square-mile (18-square-kilometer) swath of pollution from former manufacturing facilities in Nassau County.

Cuomo said the settlement was the largest of its kind in state history. Once finalized by lawyers for the state, Grumman and the Navy, the agreement will be incorporated into a consent decree.

"It was a long fight but it will protect the drinking water for the people on Long Island," Cuomo said at his daily news briefing in Albany.

Grumman said in a statement that the cleanup agreement reaffirms its "long-standing commitment to the ongoing collective efforts for the further protection of the Bethpage community."

A message seeking comment was left with the Navy.

Grumman built warplanes at the Bethpage plant for about six decades, until 1996. It was there that the Apollo Lunar Module used in the moon landings came to life. The Navy had an adjacent, Northrup Grumman-operated facility on the 600-acre (2.5-square-kilometer) site for researching, testing, engineering and assembling military aircraft.

The plume, discovered in the 1970s, contains 24 contaminants, according to the state's Department of Environmental Conservation. They include TCE, which has been found to be carcinogenic, and 1,4-dioxane, which is possibly carcinogenic.

The contamination is about 4 miles (6.5 kilometers) long and more than 2 miles (3 kilometers) wide in some places and has polluted 11 public water supply wells while threatening another 16, according to the DEC. The polluted wells have been treated for TCE and related compounds, allowing continued use for drinking water purposes, the DEC said.

As part of the agreement, the state said, the Navy will construct a network of hydraulic containment wells at the southern edge of the plume along the Southern State Parkway to halt its expansion.

Grumman will design and drill containment wells in other areas of the plume to prevent further spread and provide additional protection to nearby public water supply wells, the state said. Some of the work will begin early next year.

